



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Saving a National Treasure

FACT SHEET

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AGRICULTURE: WE'RE HALF WAY THERE

Glenn and Arlene Reid



Broadway, VA: The newborn calf was in trouble. It was born on a steep hillside, and every time the calf would try to get up his mother would nudge him and knock him down. He eventually rolled down the hill into a muddy area of a stream. And there he was, stuck up to his neck until Glenn and Arlene Reid rescued him. “It took us over an hour to get the calf out of the muck,” said Glenn.

The Reids own and operate a cow-calf operation, and also raise vegetables, flowers, and herbs for local markets in their greenhouses. After the stream and muddy area almost took the life of one of their calves, they decided to make a change. The Reids enrolled into the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to fence their cattle out of the spring that created the muddy area. The program helped install fencing, a hardened crossing, and several waterers as part of a rotational grazing system. Trees were also planted along their stream.

“It is so easy now to move the herd, I can do it myself,” Arlene says. “We used to have lots of help moving the cows when the children were young, but they are all in school now. So, this rotational grazing has really helped us.”

Keeping livestock out of calving risk areas and ease of herd movement throughout the farm are two reasons farmers enroll in programs that keep livestock out of springs, ponds, streams, and rivers.

The Reid farm is in the Linville Creek Watershed, which is on the state’s impaired waters list.

“We didn’t know the creek was polluted until we attended a meeting about it,” Glenn recounted. Not long after the meeting, the Reids met with members of the local conservation team to develop a plan.

“We enjoyed working with the team, they listened to our concerns, and together we came up with a system that works for us and we feel good that the water leaving our farm is a lot cleaner than it used to be,” Glenn said.

Keeping livestock out of streams has proven herd health benefits. It is also a clear sign to downstream neighbors and other community members of your ethics and environmental stewardship.

Try these options to keep cattle healthy by keeping them out of streams:

- Off-stream watering systems
- Stream fencing
- Stream crossings
- Buffer strips
- Rotational Grazing

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the state agricultural best management cost-share programs can help cover expenses for certain livestock stream exclusion projects that are built to specification.

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This is one in a series of articles about farmers who have implemented conservation practices to improve farm operations and water quality in nearby streams, demonstrating how agriculture has achieved half of the nutrient reductions necessary to clean up local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

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